

Notice of Allowability

Application No.	Applicant(s)	
09/900,919	SUZUKI, KOBUN	
Examiner	Art Unit	
Hussein A. El-chanti	2157	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to 10/16/2006.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-3,5-8,11-20 and 43.
3. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some* c) None of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.


ARLO ETIENNE
EXAMINER
PATENT EXAMINER
INTERVIEW CENTER 2100

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. This action is responsive to RCE received on Oct. 16, 2006.
2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Surinder Sachar on Dec. 18, 2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

- **Claim 1 (currently amended):** An image forming apparatus supervisory system configured to supervise a plurality of image forming apparatuses disposed at a plurality of user sides, said image forming apparatus supervisory system comprising:

a central supervisory apparatus configured to include a processor and to determine updated hardware in an applicable one or more of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;

a plurality of communications adapters configured to connect to the central supervisory apparatus by a communication line; a plurality of interfaces configured to connect each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses with each of the plurality of communications adapters;

a firmware download device provided in the central supervisory apparatus and configured to download prescribed updated firmware to an applicable one or more

image forming apparatuses in accordance with updated hardware of the one or more image forming apparatuses;

a firmware update device provided in each of the image forming apparatuses and configured to update firmware of the one or more image forming apparatuses with the updated firmware when the updated firmware is downloaded;

a hardware read device configured to read hardware information of each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;

a hardware information transmission device configured to transmit the hardware information from the each respective image forming apparatuses to the central supervisory apparatus;

a database provided in the central supervisory apparatus and configured to store hardware information of the plurality of image forming apparatuses; and

a database update device configured to update the database based upon the hardware information when receiving the hardware information from the one or more image forming apparatuses;

a hardware information storage device provided in the each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses and configured to store its own hardware information;

a hardware information update device configured to update its own hardware information; and

a hardware read device provided in the hardware information update device and configured to read at least a version number of the hardware;

an information comparison device configured to compare the at least a version number with the hardware information stored in the hardware information storage device; and

a determination device configured to determine if the at least a version number conforms to the hardware information, wherein said hardware information update device updates its own hardware information with the at least a version number only when the at least a version number does conform to the hardware information.

- **Claims 9-10:** canceled.
- **Claim 11:** replace "9" after "claim" with -1-- at line 2;
- **Claim 12:** replace "9" after "claim" with -1-- at line 2;
- **Claim 13:** replace "9" after "claim" with -1-- at line 2;
- **Claim 15:** replace "9" after "claim" with -1-- at line 2;
- **Claims 21-30, 34, 41 and 42:** canceled
- Claim 43 (currently amended): An image forming apparatus supervisory system configured to supervise image forming means disposed at a plurality of user sides for forming an image, said image forming apparatus supervisory system comprising:
 - central supervisory means for remotely supervising image forming means and for determining updated hardware in an applicable one or more of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;
 - firmware download means for downloading prescribed updated firmware to an applicable one or more image forming means in accordance with updated hardware of

the applicable one or more image forming means, said firmware download means provided in the central supervisory means;

firmware update means for updating firmware of the one or more image forming means with the updated use firmware when the updated firmware is downloaded, said firmware update means being provided in each of the image forming means;

hardware read means in each respective image forming apparatus for reading hardware information of each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses;

hardware information transmission means for transmitting the hardware information from the each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses to the central supervisory apparatus;

database means provided in the central supervisory means and for storing hardware information of the plurality of image forming apparatuses; and

database update means for updating the database based upon the hardware information when receiving the hardware information from the one or more image forming apparatuses;

a hardware information storage means provided in the each of the plurality of image forming apparatuses and configured to store its own hardware information;

a hardware information update means configured to update its own hardware information; and

a hardware read means provided in the hardware information update means and configured to read at least a version number of the hardware;

Art Unit: 2157

an information comparison means configured to compare the at least a version number with the hardware information stored in the hardware information storage means; and

a determination means configured to determine if the at least a version number conforms to the hardware information, wherein said hardware information update means updates its own hardware information with the at least a version number only when the at least a version number does conform to the hardware information.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

3. Claims 1-3, 5-8, 11-20 and 43 are allowed over the prior art of record.
4. This communication warrants no examiner's reason for allowance, as applicant's reply makes evident the reason for allowance, satisfying the record as whole as required by rule 37 CFR 1.104 (e).
5. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hussein A. El-chanti whose telephone number is (571)272-3999. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571)272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Hussein El-chanti

Dec. 18, 2006


ARIO ETIENNE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100